Davidson College

Davidson, North Carolina

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

3/5/62

Dr.Joshua Lederberg
Stanford University Medical Center
Palo Alto,California

Dear Dr.Lederberg:

Dr.Norman G.Anderson of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory Biology Division brought a portion of your article " Exobiology: Approaches to Life beyond the Earth " which appeared in Science (8/12/60) to my attention. The part in which we were especially interested was the sentence in the section on experimental approaches: " Larger samples, collected by a soil auger, could be subjected to a preliminary concentration of nonmineral components by flotation in a dense liquid. "

During the past two years I have worked on separating organic and inorganic components of river water and sedimented mud in density gradients trying to ascertain the distribution of radionuclides between these components. Thus far the method has been fairly successful and I have high hopes for future improvement when new density gradients, now being developed, are in full use.

Your article is one of the few I have come across suggesting the use of density gradients for the separation of organic from inorganic material. If you wish, I will be happy to send you more * detailed reports of my own work along these lines, and I would very much appreciate any information you can send me about your work in this area.

Yours truly,

Wm T Lammers

Wm.T.Lammers,
Asst.Professor of Biology

Lammers, W.T.

* I would be delighted to see this.

We have had promising but erratic success with Ludox as a flotant for raw soils. The results were much better with material pre-soaked with water. I do not know of any other literature quite comparable.

J. L.